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## Democrats Fight to Protect Middle Class Retirement Security

The middle class way of life is under attack. Republican leaders have proposed pension reform legislation that will cause many employers to freeze or terminate workers' pension plans, dumping billions of dollars worth of pension promises onto the federal government at taxpayers' and employees' expense. Republican legislation also does little to encourage employers to stick with the traditional pension system or to meaningfully connect the treatment of workers' pensions with executive pensions. Billions are dedicated to executive pension plans every year, while workers face retirement benefit losses and even layoffs. [Read more](#) about executive pension excesses, worker benefit cuts and what Democrats believe Congress should do to save middle class retirement security.

## Disaster Workers Often Not Protected by Worker Safety Laws Under Bush Administration

House Democrats this week called for an investigation into the Bush administration practice of suspending worker safety laws after major disasters. After the attack on the World Trade Center in New York City in 2001 and after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita last year, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration suspended enforcement of worker safety laws in those areas. Democrats believe first responder and recovery workers, who often toil in toxic environments, deserve the same level of workplace protection as other workers enjoy every day. [Read more](#) about the illnesses emergency responders have suffered and Democrats' call for action.

## Average CEO Now Makes 821 Times As Much As a Full-Time Minimum Wage Worker

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[New analysis](#) shows that the average CEO now makes 821 times as much as a full-time minimum wage worker -- an eye-popping statistic. By lunchtime on the first working day of the year, the typical American CEO has already made as much as the minimum wage worker will earn all year. "It is time for the leaders of Congress to stop blocking a vote on the minimum wage. America's lowest paid workers deserve a raise," Rep. Miller said.

## **Rep. Miller Calls for Answers About MSHA's Darby Mine Tragedy Investigation**

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Last week, Rep. Miller asked U.S. Labor Secretary Elaine Chao to provide critical answers about the Mine Safety and Health Administration's refusal to fully question one of its own inspectors as part of the agency's ongoing investigation of the Darby mine tragedy in Kentucky that killed five miners last month. [Read more](#) about the questions Rep. Miller wants answered.

## **Outrage of the Week: Republicans Continue to Block Minimum Wage Vote, While Voting for Tax Breaks for Millionaires and a Pay Raise for Members of Congress**

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While continuing to block a vote on increasing the minimum wage, Republican House leaders pushed to give as much as one trillion dollars to less than one percent of the wealthiest Americans by rolling back the federal estate tax. ([more](#)) By some estimates, this would be more than enough to put every American household over the poverty line.

Meanwhile, Members of Congress are on track to receive their annual pay raise. Senate Democrats have vowed to block the raise until the minimum wage is increased. In the nine years since the last federal minimum wage increase, congressional salaries have increased by more than \$30,000.

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